

**What is claimed is:**

1        1. A method for use in a conference arrangement comprising the steps of:  
2            enabling a plurality of participants in a group to participant in an ongoing  
3            conference;

4            automatically collecting participation information of each of said participants in  
5            said group;

6            automatically determining which of said participants in said group are currently  
7            active in said conference; and

8            dynamically displaying a visual representation indicating which of said  
9            participants in said group are active in said conference.

1        2. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of enabling  
2            participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said  
3            conference.

1        3. The method as defined in claim 2 further including a step of enabling said  
2            participants monitoring said conference to become active in said conference.

1        4. The method as defined in claim 2 further including a step of enabling said  
2            participants monitoring said conference to listen to said conference.

1        5. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically  
2            collecting information on devices connecting to participants to said conference and  
3            wherein said step of dynamically displaying displays said device information to all of  
4            said participants.

1        6. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically  
2            collecting information on whether said active participants have spoken in said  
3            conference.

1        7. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically  
2            collecting information regarding prior conference participation of each of said  
3            participants.

1        8. The method as defined in claim 7 wherein said prior participation information  
2            includes at least whether a participant was active in the conference.

1        9. The method as defined in claim 8 wherein said prior participation information  
2            further includes whether a participant spoke in the conference.

1        10. The method as defined in claim 7 wherein said step of collecting participation  
2 information includes a step of collecting information on whether a participant has been  
3 active and/or an actual speaker in the conference during the conference.

1        11. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said step of collecting participation  
2 information further includes a step of collecting said participation  
3 information for prescribed intervals of said conference.

1        12. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said prescribed intervals include  
2 at least each day of the conference interval, each hour of each said day, each minute of  
3 each of said hours and each second of each of said minutes.

1        13. Apparatus for use in a conference arrangement comprising:

2            a set up unit to enable a plurality of participants in a group to participant in an  
3 ongoing conference;

4            an information collection unit to automatically collect participation information of  
5 each of said participants in said group and to automatically determine which of said  
6 participants in said group are currently active in said conference; and

7            a display unit to dynamically display a visual representation indicating which of  
8 said participants in said group are active in said conference.

1        14. The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said set up unit further enables  
2 participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said  
3 conference.

1        15. The apparatus as defined in claim 14 wherein said set up unit further enables  
2 said participants monitoring said conference to become active in said conference.

1        16. The apparatus as defined in claim 14 wherein said set up unit further enables  
2 said participants monitoring said conference to listen to said conference.

1        17. The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said information collection unit  
2 further automatically collects information on devices connecting to participants to said  
3 conference and wherein said step of dynamically displaying displays said device  
4 information to all of said participants.

1        18. The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said information collection unit  
2 further automatically collects information on whether said active participants have  
3 spoken in said conference.

1        19. The apparatus as defined in claim 18 wherein said information collection unit  
2 further automatically collects information regarding prior conference participation of  
3 each of said participants.

1        20. The apparatus as defined in claim 19 wherein said prior participation  
2 information includes at least whether a participant was active in the conference.

1        21. The apparatus as defined in claim 20 wherein said prior participation  
2 information further includes whether a participant spoke in the conference.

1        22. The apparatus as defined in claim 21 wherein said information collection unit  
2 further automatically collects information on whether a participant has been active and/or  
3 an actual speaker in the conference during the conference.

1        23. The apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein said information collection unit  
2 further automatically collects said participation information for prescribed intervals of  
3 said conference.

1        24. The apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein said prescribed intervals  
2 include at least each day of the conference interval, each hour of each said day, each  
3 minute of each of said hours and each second of each of said minutes.

1        25. Apparatus for use in a conference arrangement comprising:

2            means for enabling a plurality of participants in a group to participant in an  
3 ongoing conference;

4            means for automatically collecting participation information of each of said  
5 participants in said group;

6            means for automatically determining which of said participants in said group are  
7 currently active in said conference; and

8            means for dynamically displaying a visual representation indicating which of said  
9 participants in said group are active in said conference.

1        26. The apparatus as defined in claim 25 further including means for enabling  
2 participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said  
3 conference.

1        27. The apparatus as defined in claim 25 further including means for  
2 automatically collecting information regarding prior conference participation of each of  
3 said participants.

1        28. The apparatus as defined in claim 27 wherein said means for collecting  
2 participation information includes a means for collecting information on whether a  
3 participant has been active and/or an actual speaker in the conference during the  
4 conference.

1        29. The apparatus as defined in claim 28 wherein said means for collecting  
2 participation information further includes means for collecting said participation  
3 information for prescribed intervals of said conference.